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JAP20 Rec'd PCT/PTO 01 JUN 2006
PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the Application of

Norihisu NAKAGAWA et al. Attn: PCT Branch

Application No. New U.S. National Stage of PCT/JP2004/018081

Filed: June 1, 2006 Docket No.: 128241

For: AIR-FUEL RATIO CONTROL APPARATUS OF INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE

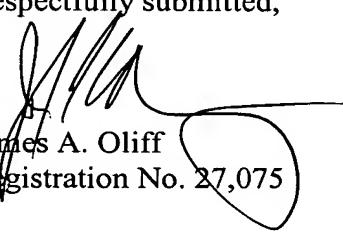
**TRANSMITTAL OF THE ANNEXES TO THE
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY**

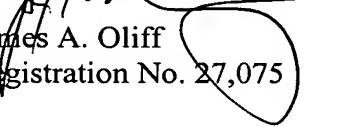
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Attached hereto is a translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/409). The attached translated material replaces claims 1-5.

Respectfully submitted,


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CLAIMS

1. (amended) An air-fuel ratio control apparatus of an internal combustion engine comprising:

a first exhaust gas purifying catalyst disposed in an exhaust passage;

a second exhaust gas purifying catalyst disposed downstream of the first exhaust gas purifying catalyst;

first air-fuel ratio acquiring means provided upstream of the first exhaust gas purifying catalyst, for acquiring an air-fuel ratio of exhaust gas;

second air-fuel ratio acquiring means for acquiring an air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas flowing into the second exhaust gas purifying catalyst; and

air-fuel ratio controlling means for controlling an air-fuel ratio in the internal combustion engine according to the air-fuel ratio acquired by the first air-fuel ratio acquiring means and the air-fuel ratio acquired by the second air-fuel ratio acquiring means,

wherein the air-fuel ratio controlling means comprises: lean control means for controlling an air-fuel ratio in the internal combustion engine until the second exhaust gas purifying catalyst becomes lean after completion of a fuel quantity increasing operation of the internal combustion engine; and intermediate lean control means for performing, at least one time, control to change the air-fuel ratio in the internal combustion engine to a lean air-fuel ratio within the range enough to make the first exhaust gas purifying catalyst lean and not

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enough to make the second exhaust gas purifying catalyst lean between the fuel quantity increasing operation and the air-fuel ratio control by the lean control means, and performs an air-fuel ratio control by the lean control means during an idle operation of the internal combustion engine.

2. (canceled)

3. The air-fuel ratio control apparatus of the internal combustion engine according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the air-fuel ratio controlling means performs an air-fuel ratio control by the intermediate lean control means during a substantially steady operation in a partial load region of the internal combustion engine.

4. The air-fuel ratio control apparatus of the internal combustion engine according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the intermediate lean control means makes the air-fuel ratio in the internal combustion engine change to a lean air-fuel ratio by the smaller amount than the lean control means.

5. The air-fuel ratio control apparatus of the internal combustion engine according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the air-fuel ratio controlling means does not perform any air-fuel ratio control by the lean control means and the intermediate

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